

## TEACHERS' RETIREMENT BOARD

### HEALTH BENEFITS COMMITTEE

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SUBJECT: Update on the California Teachers Study

ITEM NUMBER: 5

ATTACHMENT(S): 0

ACTION:       

MEETING DATE: June 5, 2002

INFORMATION: X

PRESENTER: Ed Derman

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#### SUMMARY

The California Teachers Study (CTS) is a study of 133,479 current and former public school teachers or administrators who are members of the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) to document breast cancer incidence rates of California teachers. The study is based on evidence suggesting that cancer rates were substantially higher than would otherwise have been expected and to investigate hypotheses in the causes of breast and other cancers. The study was initially funded through revenues generated by cigarette taxes for the purpose of supporting breast cancer research. The study has subsequently received federal funding. A consortium of 11 investigators from the California Department of Health Services, the Northern California Cancer Center, the University of California, Irvine, and the University of Southern California developed the CTS. The CTS Steering Committee, a collaborative partnership of the 11 investigators from the four participating institutions, manages the CTS. This committee is responsible for the scientific integrity and overall development, direction, management, and analysis of the CTS.

The CTS cohort is comprised of women who were active or retired California teachers or administrators at the time the cohort was established in 1995. In Fall 1995, the study sent a self-administered questionnaire to 329,684 women who had been public school employees and either (1) were active members of CalSTRS in 1995 with at least 1 full year of service in California schools, (2) had left the school system within the prior 72 months, or (3) were retired. CalSTRS printed mailing labels for the recruitment effort so that only those women choosing to join the cohort were identified to the investigators. A total of 133,479 women (approximately 40 percent of those approached) chose to join the cohort, returning the completed questionnaire and providing identifying and contact information to the CTS investigators. The resulting cohort is diverse, and represents a cross-section of female California educators. The women who chose to participate in study receive additional questionnaires periodically to monitor changes in their health. The women will be studied for 20 years.

Rich Pinder, who is a program manager of the study and a member of Steering Committee, will provide an update of the study.